

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION**

COMMITTEE: Bus Network and PTE Services
DATE: 6 August 2010
SUBJECT: Mystery Shopping of Bus Stations
REPORT OF: Bus and Rail Director

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appraise Members of the results of the Mystery Shopping exercises carried out in January/February and April/May 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the contents of the report

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**CONTACT OFFICERS**

Michael Renshaw	0161 244 1026 michael.renshaw@gmpte.gov.uk
Harry Worgan	0161 244 1632 harry.worgan@gmpte.gov.uk
Natalie Loughborough	0161 244 1765 natalie.loughborough@gmpte.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. GMPTE owns and operates 20 bus stations, operates the bus station at Manchester Airport on behalf of Manchester Airport plc and provides a staffing presence in Manchester City Centre within the Piccadilly area.
- 1.2. In order to assist with monitoring the performance of staff and the standard of facilities GMPTE has contracted GfK NOP Market Research to carry out four series of Mystery Shopping inspections in 2010. In each series GfK assessors make 12 visits to each bus station. The first two series in January/February and April/May have been completed.
- 1.3. The Mystery Shoppers assess seven areas – Bus Station Environment, Signage and Customer Information, Staff Availability and Customer Service, Travelshop Environment and Facilities, Travelshop Staff Interaction, Public Toilets and Safety and Security.
- 1.4. The overall satisfaction with bus stations was 73% in January/February and 74% in April/May. The results are set out in more detail below.
- 1.5. The same categories are assessed separately by Mystery Shoppers with disabilities. The shoppers are selected from groups with walking difficulties, hearing impairment and vision impediments. The overall satisfaction rating from this group was 63% for both series.
- 1.6. It is intended that a further report will be submitted after further inspections have been carried out in series three and four.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1. GMPTE has historically measured the quality of bus station assets using SQUIRE (Service Quality Inspection Regime), the results of which were reported to Transport Network Committee. Additionally a Mystery Shopping exercise, concentrating on customer service, was carried out in 2007.
- 2.2. Bus Station SQUIRE was discontinued in 2008 due to its heavy concentration on asset management and its lack of input into staff performance. It was decided to carry out a further Mystery Shopping exercise that this time would combine asset management and staff performance monitoring.
- 2.3. GMPTE has commissioned GfK NOP to carry out four series of Mystery Shopping at bus stations in 2010 at a cost of £85,000.
- 2.4. The Mystery Shopping will measure the performance of staff and the quality of facilities and the environment. GMPTE has an annual bus

station staffing budget of £5 million and an annual maintenance budget of £1.4 million.

- 2.5. GfK has recruited a panel of shoppers specifically for this survey. The panel contains a balanced spread of gender, age and ethnicity.
- 2.6. Each quarter GfK assessors make 12 visits to each bus station.
- 2.7. Different assessors visit each location, and visits are made at different times of day on different days of the week, including Saturdays but excluding Sundays. Visits take place between 0700 and 2200.
- 2.8. The Mystery Shopping results are broken down into seven areas – Bus Station Environment, Signage and Customer Information, Staff Availability and Customer Service, Travelshop Environment and Facilities, Travelshop Staff Interaction, Public Toilets and Safety and Security.
- 2.9. Two series of Mystery Shopping have so far been carried out in January/February and April/May 2010.
- 2.10. A separate exercise is carried out by Mystery Shoppers with disabilities. The shoppers are selected from groups with walking difficulties, hearing impairment and vision impediments. The overall satisfaction rating from this group was 63% for both series.
- 2.11. The results will be used to identify actions that will drive improvements to customer service and facilities.

3. Detailed review of results and actions

- 3.1. The overall satisfaction with bus stations was 73% in January/February and 74% in April/May.
- 3.2. Areas with positive scores included sufficient signage for easy navigation (95% series 1/95% series 2), courtesy of staff (97%/96%), appearance of staff (100%/100%) and air quality (99%/99%).
- 3.3. Areas for improvement included pedestrian crossings intact without gaps (47%/49%) and complete answer without need to prompt from Travelshop staff (61%/54%).
- 3.4. A programme is in place to refurbish damaged crossing points and customer service standards for bus station staff will be introduced in summer 2010. The standards will be the focus of customer service training for front-line staff which starts at the end of July. The standards are included in appendix one.

- 3.5. In the Environment section windows and ceilings were found to be in good condition (98%/99%), whilst station cleanliness and litter (77%/76%) was an area where improvement was felt to be needed.
- 3.6. Bus Station Management have increased checks on cleaning standards at all stations, and a target of 80% has been set for the next period.
- 3.7. In the section covering signage and information, timetable (98%/99%) and route finder boards (94%/95%) were easy to find. Less easy to find were notices with information relating to the adjacent town centre. Work is now being carried out with the Corporate Communications Department to provide the relevant posters, and a target date of the end of September has been set for their display.
- 3.8. Almost all staff used language that was easily understood (100%/99%) and had a clean and tidy appearance (99%/100%). Only 22% of Mystery Shoppers found staff (excluding Travelshops) easy to find, although 51% were able to find a member of staff within the 15 minute visit.
- 3.9. Leaflet racks for customers were highly visible (100%/100%) in Travelshops and on almost all visits the shoppers were able to make an enquiry of a member of Travelshop staff (100%/99%). The offer to use the Language Line service was poor (33%/17%) and information was often not written down or provided in printed form (34%/33%). Language Line training will be included in the Customer Service training module due to start in late July and Travelshop staff will be asked to offer customers written or printed information. Stocks of printed information pads will be distributed to all Travelshops.
- 3.10. Public toilets were clearly signposted (93%/93%) but a number did not have the opening times displayed (64%/51%). Bus Station Management will provide signage or liaise with local authorities, where appropriate, to resolve this issue. The deadline for this work is the end of August.

3.11. Scores by Category

Category	Series 1 %	Series 2 %
Overall	73	74
Environment	84	84
Signage and Customer Information	84	84
Staff availability and Customer Service	42	43
Travelshop Environment and Facilities	83	85
Travelshop Staff Interaction	83	85
Public Toilets	69	67
Safety and Security	77	77

3.12. Action Planning

These are the priority actions identified.

Action	Date	Owner
Role badges for staff have been ordered to address the fact that on only 29% occasions staff were observed to be wearing a role badge.	August 2010	H. Worgan, Section Head, Bus Station Operations
Town Centre Plans - GMPTE Communications Directorate to produce one for each bus station.	September 2010	H. Worgan, Section Head, Bus Station Operations
Corporate note pads - these are being re-launched and used for writing down information	August 2010	H. Worgan, Section Head, Bus Station Operations
The suitability of cleaning machines is being re-assessed as a part of the measures that are being introduced to improve cleaning standards.	Ongoing	All
Travelshop staff have been given feedback and are working through the comments in order to improve performance.	Complete	All
The use of Language Line is included in the forthcoming Customer Service Training.	Complete	All
Spot inspections of the cleaning standards at all bus stations.	Commenced 1 st June	All

4. **Recommendations**

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

Appendix 1 – Customer Service Standards at Bus Stations

WHAT YOUR MANAGER EXPECTS FROM YOU

- Your commitment to doing the things, and acting in the way described in this pocket guide
- Help them to get better at helping you, which means:
 - Making sure that you understand the organisation's vision and values, what they mean in terms of customer service and the behaviour expected of you and your colleagues.
 - Making sure that you have clear goals and objectives, and that you understand how they contribute to achieving the organisation's vision and objectives.
 - Telling your manager what information and resources you need to do your job effectively.
 - Making sure that you spend time with your manager to agree the training or support that you need.
 - Coming forward with ideas that could improve your own or your team's performance.
 - Recognising that performance appraisals will help you to develop yourself, and that preparation is needed.
 - Providing constructive feedback to your manager on their effectiveness as a leader.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR MANAGER

- Clear goals and objectives to be agreed with you and all members of the team, and an explanation of how they contribute to achieving the organisation's vision and objectives
- Time spent with you to identify any training or support you may need
- Encouragement for you to contribute ideas that could improve your own or your team's performance.
- Seek your feedback on whether services are fit for purpose.
- Regular time spent with you and the team, to review performance regarding customer service, and to talk to customers and to seek their feedback
- Recognition and celebration of good performance, and constructively addressing poor performance
- Regular performance appraisals with you
- Actively seeking constructive feedback from you on their effectiveness as a leader

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOU

- To engage with them, work together and challenge each other to implement the guidelines presented in this pocket guide

Taking Care of our customers

Standards of service for GMPTE bus stations

Customer Service

- *All GMPTE & Metrolink personnel will be easily identifiable by their uniforms and will endeavour to help customers in a polite, impartial and professional manner at all times*
- *We will continue to develop our staff and systems to provide the highest levels of customer service.*

How and where customers can access information

- *All of our properties are equipped with appropriate directional signage and information to help you find your way around and to help you find the bus or tram that you want*

Safety and Security

- *We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for passengers and staff on all of our vehicles and at all of our bus stations & tram stops.*
- *We aim to deal with, and deter, anti social & undesirable behaviour on all GMPTE & Metrolink property*

The condition of our facilities

- *Customers can expect all facilities at bus stations & tram stops to be clean and well maintained*

Our expectations

- *In return, we ask you to help us achieve our standards by being courteous & respectful towards us. Our staff have the right to work in a safe environment, free from aggressive or threatening behaviour and to be treated politely*
- *People who are unable to treat our staff or our property with respect will be asked to*

**Customer Service
at
Bus Stations**

A pocket guide for Staff

Appendix 1 – Customer Service Standards at Bus Stations

WHAT YOUR MANAGER EXPECTS FROM YOU

- Your commitment to doing the things, and acting in the way described in this pocket guide
- Help them to get better at helping you, which means:
 - Making sure that you understand the organisation's vision and values, what they mean in terms of customer service and the behaviour expected of you and your colleagues.
 - Making sure that you have clear goals and objectives, and that you understand how they contribute to achieving the organisation's vision and objectives.
 - Telling your manager what information and resources you need to do your job effectively.
 - Making sure that you spend time with your manager to agree the training or support that you need.
 - Coming forward with ideas that could improve your own or your team's performance.
 - Recognising that performance appraisals will help you to develop yourself, and that preparation is needed.
 - Providing constructive feedback to your manager on their effectiveness as a leader.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR MANAGER

- Clear goals and objectives to be agreed with you and all members of the team, and an explanation of how they contribute to achieving the organisation's vision and objectives
- Time spent with you to identify any training or support you may need
- Encouragement for you to contribute ideas that could improve your own or your team's performance.
- Seek your feedback on whether services are fit for purpose.
- Regular time spent with you and the team, to review performance regarding customer service, and to talk to customers and to seek their feedback
- Recognition and celebration of good performance, and constructively addressing poor performance
- Regular performance appraisals with you
- Actively seeking constructive feedback from you on their effectiveness as a leader

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOU

- To engage with them, work together and challenge each other to implement the guidelines presented in this pocket guide

Taking Care of our customers

Standards of service for GMPTE bus stations

Customer Service

- *All GMPTE & Metrolink personnel will be easily identifiable by their uniforms and will endeavour to help customers in a polite, impartial and professional manner at all times*
- *We will continue to develop our staff and systems to provide the highest levels of customer service.*

How and where customers can access information

- *All of our properties are equipped with appropriate directional signage and information to help you find your way around and to help you find the bus or tram that you want*

Safety and Security

- *We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for passengers and staff on all of our vehicles and at all of our bus stations & tram stops.*
- *We aim to deal with, and deter, anti social & undesirable behaviour on all GMPTE & Metrolink property*

The condition of our facilities

- *Customers can expect all facilities at bus stations & tram stops to be clean and well maintained*

Our expectations

- *In return, we ask you to help us achieve our standards by being courteous & respectful towards us. Our staff have the right to work in a safe environment, free from aggressive or threatening behaviour and to be treated politely*
- *People who are unable to treat our staff or our property with respect will be asked to*

**Customer Service
at
Bus Stations**

A pocket guide for Staff